

Dear Appropriations Committee Co-chairs:

Senator Catherine Osten, Senator Paul Formica, and Representative Toni Walker,

I'm writing to encourage you to prioritize funding for the Educational Center for the Arts, a truly essential and exemplary educational program.

I was a student in the poetry and prose program at ECA during the second half of high school, from 1986-1988. I attribute much of my later academic, creative, and business success to the excellent training in writing I received at ECA. Not only did my experience there show me how a group of people could support each other's creative growth and development. It helped me discover that I wanted to continue learning. Regular high school had largely failed me in this regard.

I received a Ph.D. in social psychology in 2009, have published chapters in academic anthologies and articles in scientific journals, had my blog read by millions of people around the world, and am currently working out a multi-book deal with Parallax Press. All of these endeavors were made possible because of the wordsmithing and capacity to communicate complex ideas I learned from Caroline Rosenstone and other teachers at ECA. I have been a teacher myself for many years, having founded Interchange Counseling Institute in San Francisco in 2002 (www.interchangecounseling.com), and have used much of what I learned about experiential education from ECA as a basis for how I teach the art of counseling.

Thanks for your consideration!

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